



American Tuna Inc. | 4364 Bonita Rd. #331 | Bonita, CA 91902
(866) 817-0497 Toll Free
www.AmericanTuna.com

February 8, 2012

VIA EMAIL: pfmc.comments@noaa.gov

Pacific Fishery Management Council
7700 NE Ambassador Place, Suite 101
Portland, OR 97220-1384

Re: US – Canada Albacore Treaty

Dear Mr. Chairman and Council Members,

American Tuna is a family-owned domestic processor of US albacore. Our founding families come from generations of albacore fishermen. Our American Tuna brand albacore products have found strong consumer support for the US pole & troll albacore fishery, its heritage, and its American albacore fishermen.

As buyers and processors of albacore from this US fishery, we are well aware of the struggle of US fishermen to continue this fishery's great tradition. For each US fisherman and US vessel, there are countless jobs that depend on them. We have watched the numbers of US vessels decline under the invasion of US Exclusive Economic Zone by the Canadian fishing fleet under the treaty.

Specifically, American Tuna strongly opposes this treaty and believes that any discussion of renegotiation at this time is completely inappropriate. This Council should recommend ending this treaty in efforts to begin the process of restoring the US albacore fishery for US fishermen and their families.

Almost from the start, this treaty was unfair, inequitable, and imbalanced. In the past decade it has become intolerable. Where was the priority that has to be applied to US fishermen and this US fishery? Why else do we have an EEZ?

Now, the Canadian government has signed a Free Trade Agreement with the European Union. As a result, our American albacore products will confront a 22% tariff by the EU, while Canadian albacore is free from that 22% tariff. How is this fair? Those albacore are caught in our US EEZ by a foreign fleet from Canada. A large majority of that catch is landed in Canada, processed by Canadian processors, and sold as Canadian albacore. How is this fair?

Canada has invested heavily in increasing its fishing fleet's capacity and developing the processing capacity to go with it. They have steadily ramped up their fleet's effort and harvest in the US EEZ. And our fleet is half what it was.

When the treaty started, most of the albacore processors were here in the US. Now, we don't have enough processors to handle the US catch. Why is Canada's albacore fishery and related industry growing and thriving so well? And why is our US fishery struggling?

We ask the Council to take action to enable this US fishery to realize the full potential of this sustainable albacore resource. Recognize the importance of this fishery to US fishermen, the coastal communities, and the US economy. These fishermen are the foundation of an entire fishery economy. We have already lost too many.

American Tuna urges you to oppose any effort to renew or renegotiate this treaty. If circumstances improve in the future and there is a possibility of an equitable and balanced arrangement, we are sure the American albacore fishermen will let you know when they want to fish in Canadian waters.

Sincerely,

Natalie Webster
Family Member
(619)559-1340
nataliewebster@americantuna.com